



BUSINESS NEWS

Volume IV, Number 1

February 2005

MAKING AN IMPACT!

With a new streetscape, building renovations and a variety of exciting events drawing crowds from across the region, downtown Sumter has become the focus of much attention and praise from Sumter's citizens. However, these improvements only tell part of the story. The goal of downtown revitalization is to restore the city's central business district to a thriving center of commerce offering a variety of products and services.

With this goal in mind, the Economic Restructuring Committee has moved into a new phase of planning that will enhance the business mix downtown and bring even more people into the area. "We have raised the community's awareness of downtown," says Ray Reich,



Downtown Sumter is reaching out to the larger community with new initiatives like this cooperative advertisement, which recently appeared in The Item.

INSIDE...

- What You Need to Know about Appearance Codes
- Sumter@Six Returns
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Downtown Development Manager. "Now it's time to let them know that downtown doesn't just look different—it really is a different downtown than they remember, with a variety of products and services to offer."

The first effort in this new initiative has been the

development of a cooperative advertising program designed to bring Sumter's downtown businesses to the attention of the larger community. "There are still so many people who just never make it downtown to see what our merchants have to offer," Reich says. "A lot of these are smaller businesses that can't really afford mass advertising, and the cooperative program is a great way for them to join forces in letting people know, 'Hey, we're here, and we think we've got something you'd like.' It's a great, cost-effective way to bring downtown's message to the general public."

The first ad, a full page in the *Sumter Item*, appeared on February 10, 2005. Initial plans are to run a full page three times per month, with eventual expansion to include radio and cable television. "Participation has been terrific at this point, and we want to thank those businesses who have already signed up to participate," Reich continues. "We'd like to get even more businesses on board."

Establishing an effective promotional campaign for

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Downtown

AFTER FIVE

February 24

Columbia Poetry Slam Team
Sumter Opera House

February 26-27

"Fences," a play by August Wilson
Sumter Opera House

February 27

Sumter Community Concert Band
Patriot Hall

March 8

Tony Kenny's "Ireland"
Patriot Hall

March 18

Scottish Steelfest
Brody Pavilion

March 17-31

Studies of Light and Shadow
Sumter Gallery of Art

March 22

"Come on and Hear"
Patriot Hall

Downtown Rocks!

April 14, 2005 marks the fifth anniversary of the first Sumter@Six, downtown's hugely successful summer outdoor concert series. The party begins with an encore performance by Bill Pinkney and the Original Drifters, who performed at the inaugural show in April 2001. Since that time, Sumter@Six has become one of the community's most popular events, with crowds of more than 1,000 at most of the monthly shows. This year's lineup features:

April 14

Bill Pinkney & the Original Drifters

May 12

The Fantastic Shakers

June 9

General Johnson & the Chairmen of the Board

July 14

Second Nature

August 11

The Footnotes

September 8

Billy Scott & the Prophets

October 13

Northtower

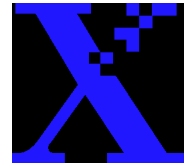
The 2005 Sumter@Six concert series' platinum sponsors are XDOS, Sumter National Bank and Tuomey Healthcare Systems.

The fun continues on into the fall, with plans underway for 2005's "Halloween on Main," an event that enjoyed great success on its 2004 debut, with estimated attendance of more than 3,000. Downtown will also host the annual Sumter-Shaw Streetfest in September.

For more information about downtown events, please call the Downtown Development Office at (803) 436-2535 or log on to www.downtownsumter.org.

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Printing of this edition of Downtown Business News was graciously donated by X-DOS, 18 East Liberty Street.



MAKING AN IMPACT! *(continued from page 1)*

downtown merchants is a big job, and Sumter's businesspeople are receiving assistance from one of the best. "We are excited to have Beth Fordham on board," Reich says. "She will be working with all our participating merchants on developing a complete marketing strategy for the downtown area." Ms. Fordham has been with the city's Department of Growth and Development since January, and in addition to her work with the Economic Restructuring

Committee, will also assist in various other city improvement projects *(see profile on Page 3)*.

"This is prime time for letting people know that you're here and what you have to offer," Reich says. "With three new businesses in Liberty Center, and with Central Carolina moving their Continuing Education programs into the former Federal Building, there will be a huge increase in downtown traffic. What we're

doing is giving our business owners a cost-effective way to get the word out to as many as possible. Working together, we can make more of an impact."

For more information on cooperative advertising, please call Beth Fordham at (803) 436-2635.



BETH FORDHAM

The City of Sumter is pleased to welcome Beth Fordham as our new Growth & Development Specialist. Beth comes to the City from SAFE Federal Credit Union, where she served as Advertising Director for seven years. Beth is involved in various downtown revitalization projects and the City's new Department of Growth & Development. She will work closely with downtown merchants on new marketing strategies designed to increase consumer traffic. Ms. Fordham is excited to be part of this new initiative, saying, "Downtown truly is the heart of Sumter. Our merchants understand and exemplify the importance of friendly, hometown service. No matter what name is on their door, service really is their business. I'm excited to be able to meet and recognize the many downtown merchants who have either served Sumter for many years, or recently made the decision to operate their business downtown. We are all excited to be a part of the revitalization of downtown that we hope will make downtown Sumter the best place to be."

APPEARANCE CODES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**ORDINANCE NO. 2122
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE
DOWNTOWN/CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT APPEARANCE CODE
(ORDINANCE NO. 1953)
FOR THE CITY OF SUMTER, SOUTH CAROLINA**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SUMTER, SOUTH CAROLINA, AT ITS REGULAR MEETING DULY ASSEMBLED AND BY THE AUTHORITY THEREOF:

That the **Downtown/Central Business District Appearance Code (Ordinance No. 1953)** for the City of Sumter, South Carolina, is hereby amended as shown below:

Add the following wording to Section 3 – 10 (h) WINDOWS:

No more than 25% of the storefront windows may be covered by signs. This restriction does not apply to signs permanently painted on or etched into the window to serve as the business' primary sign.

The interior area of enclosed display windows shall be maintained free of dirt, debris, and clutter. Where display windows are not enclosed, the area from the windows to 24 inches inside the building shall be considered the display window and all before-mentioned requirements shall apply.

No temporary paper or cardboard signage shall be placed on the exterior of windows or the building surface by the building owner, tenant or third party. All temporary signage, if used, must be on the inside of the glass and shall be considered when calculating the 25% allowance for window signage.

All window signage, temporary or permanent, shall be replaced when fading or other deterioration occurs.

ALL OTHER SECTIONS OF ORDINANCE NO. 1953, THE DOWNTOWN/CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT APPEARANCE CODE OF THE CITY OF SUMTER, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS, SHALL REMAIN AS PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED.

ADOPTED IN COUNCIL ASSEMBLED THIS 19TH DAY OF OCTOBER 2004, TO TAKE EFFECT IMMEDIATELY.

In October 2004, at the request of the Downtown Board of Directors, Sumter City Council amended appearance codes to include jurisdiction over window displays (*see sidebar, left*). "The new code is designed to enhance business downtown," says Ray Reich, Downtown Development Manager. "What we need for people to understand is that this is to everyone's benefit. National retailers and experts in consumer behavior have confirmed that an attractive window display is a major positive in bringing in new customers." He continues, "We do realize that some business owners may need new ideas about making their display windows the best they can be, and the city is available and willing to work with them, offering free, professional design assistance to all interested merchants." The new ordinance also prohibits posters on the outside of display windows. "We are asking your cooperation in not letting people put things on your windows," Reich says. Beginning in April, penalties for code violation range up to a \$500 per day fine until display windows are brought into compliance.

Reich encourages business owners to look at the positive side of the new ordinance. "It is a challenge to our merchants to make their display windows look as good as possible, and that creates a winning situation for everyone involved."

For more information on what the new codes mean for your business, please contact the Downtown Development Office at (803) 436-2535.

Project Updates

- ❖ Welcome to downtown's newest businesses: Troy State University, Caroline Mack Center for the Arts and Mr. Handyman. All three are located at the new Liberty Center, the former site of Brody's Department Store. Stop in and say hi!
 - ❖ Final details on the new streetscape will include tree plantings and irrigation on Main Street. New streetlight crossarms will soon go up at Liberty and Main, along with signage marking the downtown area as a historic district. Work will commence on Liberty Street as funds become available.
 - ❖ Welcome to Central Carolina Technical College, which is moving its Continuing Education programs into the former Federal Building. Renovations are underway, and the move will be completed by June. The move will bring 10,000 students a year into the city's central business district.
 - ❖ The annual Downtown Planning Retreat will be held March 11 at 12 noon in Council Chambers on the 4th floor of the Sumter Opera House. Lunch will be served. Please call (803) 436-2635 to reserve your space.
 - ❖ The Clark Law Firm has broken ground and is their new building is under construction.
 - ❖ Façade grant applications have been mailed and are due March 11. If you have not received one, please call the Downtown Development Office or pick one up at the Sumter Opera House.
- For more information on downtown projects and developments, please call the Downtown Development Office at (803) 436-2535.



City of Sumter Downtown Development Office
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